



Cooperation in Latin America

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IT IS OBVIOUS that library cooperation embraces a great many different types of activities, e.g., joint acquisition and sharing of resources, establishing centers for technical processing, sharing of staff, joint programs and activities among different types of libraries, and cooperation in administrative and promotional aspects of library service. To review these and other developments in interlibrary cooperation in Latin America would require far more extended treatment than is possible here.

As the observer of the book and library scene in the countries south of the United States becomes familiar with the many diverse trends in library development, he comes to realize that there are relatively few instances of cooperation which reach across the entire area. However, just as library cooperation in the United States often crosses state boundaries, in Latin America a considerable portion of the cooperative activities centers around regions like the Caribbean and Central America. In addition, there are presently relatively few specific examples of the kinds of cooperation mentioned above. In fact, much cooperative activity in Latin America still consists of personal arrangements such as discussion, sharing of information, and exchange of ideas and procedures rather than of formal programs, interinstitutional agreements, and contractual relationships. Thus, it should come as no surprise that library associations and conferences are probably two of the most-used vehicles in cooperative efforts to improve library service in Latin America.

These conditions have largely determined the focus of this article. Rather than attempting to record many local activities—useful in their immediate areas but of less importance in the overall dimensions of library development in Latin America—this paper attempts to report

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on cooperation which, for the most part, embraces several countries making up one of the regions. Probably the two most active of these areas in recent years have been the Caribbean and Central America. Joint efforts have also taken place in the River Plate area (Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay) and, more recently, among the Andean countries. Cooperation involving Brazil, the largest and most populous country, has been mainly internal, although the work of the Federation of Brazilian Library Associations (FEBAB) resembles that of other associations.

One of the most active and continuing cooperative efforts has been that of the Latin American Commission of the International Federation of Documentation (FID/CLA). At the twenty-sixth meeting of FID in Rio de Janeiro in 1960 (the first such meeting in Latin America), FID/CLA formulated the following objectives: (1) to disseminate the objectives and activities of FID, (2) to foster the creation and development of documentation in Latin America, and (3) to promote collaboration and stimulate the coordination of documentary work in these countries.¹ Membership centers on a single institution of each country—usually the one most closely linked with scientific and technical documentation, although in some cases the national university. By 1975, membership had grown to include thirteen countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. FID/CLA conducts its activities primarily through its president and secretary, who each serve a four-year term (originally the period was three years). Successive presidents and secretaries have come from Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. Although annual meetings began in 1960, a new element was introduced in 1967 when these sessions were broadened, in alternate years, to serve as the framework for regional documentation congresses, four of which have now taken place: Mexico, 1967; Rio de Janeiro, 1969; Lima, 1971; and Bogotá, 1973. One of the largest Latin American conferences devoted to libraries and/or documentation took place in 1969, when almost 1,200 delegates and observers from thirteen Latin American countries, the United States, Canada, and Denmark assembled in Brazil; this was also the first congress for which FID/CLA published annals, as it has subsequently done for the 1971 and 1973 meetings.

Another important activity of FID/CLA is its Commission on the Universal Decimal Classification (FID/CLA/CDU), which has assumed responsibility for translating and issuing the classification schedules in Spanish and Portuguese; in this activity it cooperates with the main FID

Committee on Classification (FID/CCC) and also the national FID members in Spain and Portugal.

FID/CLA has met its objective of disseminating information not only by publishing the annals of the regional documentation congresses (in its series entitled "Special Publications"), but also by issuing, since 1964, a newsletter entitled *Informaciones/Informações FID/CLA* several times each year. Another series, "Folletos de Difusión," irregular in frequency, has reached eighteen numbers; the conclusions and recommendations of the FID/CLA regular meetings appear in this series.

THE CARIBBEAN

In examining the Caribbean area, it is clear that Alma Jordan's study forms the obvious starting point for any discussion of library cooperation.² Covering only the ten English-speaking territories which formed the short-lived West Indies federation (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua, Montserrat, and St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla) and emphasizing public libraries, the study provides a thorough review of the period up to the mid-1960s and an admirable backdrop for any consideration of library cooperation since then, not only for that area but also for the Caribbean in a wider geographic sense.³

Jordan devotes Part IV of her study to West Indian library cooperation; she examines the background and leading agents in cooperation, cooperative library organization, cooperative technical services, cooperation for library resources, cooperative readers' and bibliographic services, public and school library cooperation, university and special library cooperation, cooperative library staffing and training, and administrative and promotional aspects of library cooperation.

Probably the most important project on which she reports in terms of influence on the entire framework of interisland cooperation was the pioneering Eastern Caribbean Regional Library (ECRL), which came into being as a result of the Savage and Sydney reports (1934 and 1947)⁴ and of financial assistance from the Carnegie Corporation and the British Council. Described by Jordan as "the first full flowering of the spirit of library cooperation,"⁵ ECRL played an important role in the 1940s and 1950s through its work in reorganizing libraries, persuading governments to introduce legislation for free library service, providing technical services, and donating processed books to island libraries. In addition, following the recommendations in

Sydney's report, ECRL provided many bibliographical services: a union catalog, interlibrary loans, supplementing local resources by collecting books not ordinarily purchased by the smaller islands' libraries, and acting as a bibliographic information center. Its role, in Jordan's opinion, resembled "the American state library service center in its early stages. It was not, however, supported in the same way, since there has been no equivalent level of government, except the short-lived federal government of the West Indies which it preceded."⁶ The West Indies federation, however, "went out of existence in 1962 without ever adopting it [ECRL] officially,"⁷ and the outside funding ceased. The result was a breakdown in library cooperation, but Jordan nevertheless sums up its accomplishments in these words: "A whole new concept of library service was gradually brought forcibly home to governments and people alike, and a century-old regime was subtly replaced."⁸

Still another, quite different cooperative library came into being in the area—the Caribbean Regional Library. Originally started as the Library of the Caribbean Commission with headquarters at Port-of-Spain, it moved to Puerto Rico in 1961, when the Caribbean Organization succeeded the Caribbean Commission. When the organization ceased its operations in 1965, it was decided to keep the library intact for the benefit of all Caribbean countries, and it was turned over in trust to the government of Puerto Rico. The administration and care of the library were, in turn, given to the newly created Caribbean Economic Development Corporation (CODECA) with three main tasks: "to keep up and enlarge the collection, to give service to the Caribbean area, and to bring up-to-date the publication of the *Current Caribbean Bibliography*."⁹

A third important instance of library cooperation is in the university library field, where the libraries of the University of the West Indies (UWI) reflect the cooperative nature of the institution itself, which receives support from various governments in the British Caribbean. The libraries are located on three UWI campuses: Mona (Jamaica), St. Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago), and Cave Hill (Barbados). Although the Mona campus has by far the largest collection (about 70 percent of the total holdings, which exceed 250,000 volumes), some division of collecting responsibility reflects the varying academic offerings on the three campuses. In addition, this library provides a noteworthy cooperative service, the "collection and cataloging, for itself, U.W.I. (St. Augustine), and the Library of Congress, of copies of current book, pamphlet, journal, report, and government publications

of the twelve island and two mainland territories of the English-speaking Caribbean."¹⁰

In the field of cooperative bibliography and indexing, a paper presented at the San Juan conference in 1969 traced the various projects, of which the most important is the *Current Caribbean Bibliography*. In her paper, Zimmerman found relatively few other projects that had progressed significantly. She listed desiderata as: (1) broadening coverage of the Caribbean area, (2) giving more attention to periodicals and newspapers, and (3) improving retrospective bibliography.¹¹

We now turn to one of the most important developments in recent years. Jordan, writing of the conditions which she had reviewed, concluded that there would be no better means to promote library service than a formal library association serving the entire region. She observed that, while "the potential scope of the [proposed West Indies library] association activities is almost as wide as that covered [by associations] abroad . . .," a first undertaking might well be regional conferences. Jordan maintained that: "[these conferences] could be rotated in location, and followed up by regular local meetings, seminars, and workshops, all devoted to achieving definite goals mutually agreed upon. Where local associations already exist, their activities could fit into this over-all pattern in addition to pursuing specific local aims and meeting interest group needs."¹² Secondly, such an association might have "a publication program to promote greater communication between unit members. . . . A third responsibility to be assumed in the interest of library development concerns research on local library problems. . . . The association's distinctive contribution to library development may consist, however, of a concerted attack on problem facets of local library services such as support, staff, and committee administration. . . . Education for librarianship and related functions will demand close attention. . . . The channels of library promotion for extension and development open to a West Indian Library Association, especially through links with larger and more developed bodies abroad, are legion."¹³

Such an association did appear shortly after the period in which Jordan made her study. Although it embraces primarily university and research libraries, these terms have been interpreted broadly in order to bring together personnel from most of the region's important libraries. The Association of Caribbean University and Research Libraries (ACURIL—the "I" in the acronym being a survival of the phrase "Research Institute" in the first form of the name) came into

being in 1969 as an outgrowth of the cooperative movement among universities in the Caribbean, which had received formal structure as the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA). It is clear that the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) also furnished useful precedents for structure and possible goals; the new group decided that, like ARL, membership would consist primarily of institutions from the Caribbean islands and from countries (or states of the United States) bordering on the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of Mexico, although it also provides for personal members. ACURIL's constitution states its purposes as follows: "to facilitate the development and use of libraries and the identification of library collections in support of the whole range of intellectual and educational endeavour throughout the Caribbean area, to strengthen the profession of librarianship in the region, and to promote co-operative library activities in pursuit of these objectives."¹⁴ As Jordan had anticipated, one of the association's chief activities has turned out to be its annual conferences (scheduled for the last quarter of the year), each of which centers around a theme and features sessions devoted to presentation and discussion of working papers related to the theme. Themes and locations of conferences to date are as follows: (1) San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1969, acquisition of library materials; (2) Bridgetown, Barbados, 1970, government documents; (3) Caracas, Venezuela, 1971, library resources for research in the Caribbean; (4) San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1972, personnel administration in libraries; (5) Miami, Florida, 1973, the role of the library in the development of a country; and (6) St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, 1974, centralization of technical services in academic and research libraries.¹⁵ Papers from the first two conferences have been published,¹⁶ and those of the third and fourth are in process; the association hopes to continue this practice. Another important step in furthering communication among ACURIL's membership was the establishment of a quarterly bulletin in 1973: *ACURIL Carta Informativa/Newsletter*.

ACURIL also moves toward its goals through ten working committees: (1) Committee on Acquisitions—Spanish-Speaking Area, (2) Committee on Acquisitions—English-Speaking Area, (3) Committee on Bibliography, (4) Committee on Indexing—Spanish-Speaking Area, (5) Committee on Indexing—English-Speaking Area, (6) Committee on Microfilming, (7) Nominating Committee, (8) Committee on Personnel, (9) Committee on Publications and Promotion, and (10) Committee on Constitution and Bylaws; an ad hoc Committee on Resolutions functions for each

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conference. The wide separation of constituent members has made it difficult to assure a viable committee structure which could allow for adequate working sessions between the annual conferences. The membership of the larger committees is now concentrated in one country, with either a few additional members or a smaller subcommittee in other countries; this appears to be a reasonably effective compromise.

Perhaps the best testimonial to ACURIL's effectiveness lies in a membership which has grown from 35 to nearly 100. Although the executive council determines acceptance of applicants, it has interpreted "research libraries" in a generous fashion, recognizing that public libraries on smaller islands and special libraries in government and industry should be encouraged and included in membership. The enthusiasm shown in the annual meetings and the genuine interest in exchanging ideas is truly impressive, especially considering the range in institutions—from large university libraries in Florida to public libraries on small Caribbean islands—and the language barrier (the association functions in both Spanish and English). The 1974 membership of ninety-one institutions showed a wide range of countries and territories which border on the Caribbean, but it is interesting to note that more than one-half of the members (forty-eight) are located in Puerto Rico and Venezuela; there are six from the United States, but no other country furnishes more than four; Cuba is conspicuous by its absence. To have achieved participation of institutions in twenty-five countries in a few short years is an accomplishment. (In addition, six associate and forty-four personal members make a grand total of 141 members).¹⁷

CENTRAL AMERICA

In Central America, just as in the Caribbean, the movement toward library cooperation received powerful stimulus from the general steps taken in the direction of regional integration on political and economic as well as educational and cultural levels. In the field of higher education, one important agency is the Central American Superior University Council (Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano, CSUCA), which aspires not only to improve each of the five national universities (in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala) composing its membership, but also to promote specialization through the development of regional schools and centers, and consequently to avoid duplication of effort. Recognizing

very early the importance of cooperation among the libraries of its members, CSUCA sponsored the first meeting of Central American university librarians in San José, Costa Rica, in March 1962; twenty-nine persons attended, including delegates from the five countries and experts and observers from outside the region. Authors of the working papers assembled concrete information on the staffs, finances, collections, technical services, and circulation at the libraries of the five institutions; one study dealt with the establishment of a regional library school. The meeting concluded, however, that cooperation among these libraries was nonexistent, and it proposed a program of action centering around the exchange of publications (especially those of the parent institutions), publication of a journal or newsletter by each library as a means of improving communication, preparation of a list of Central American reference books, and the interchange of staff.¹⁸

Three years later CSUCA, with the collaboration of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Regional Office for Central America and Panama (ROCAP), sponsored a further study of Central America's university libraries. Carried out by three American experts, the report divided its suggestions into two groups: (1) recommendations for the improvement of libraries in each university, and (2) recommendations for the improvement of libraries on a regional basis. The latter group consisted of twenty-nine proposals centering around five major areas: the administration of the program, training of personnel, resources and technical services, use of libraries, and buildings and equipment. A sixth group of four recommendations dealt with matters related to libraries—e.g., a regional library association, an advisory committee for CSUCA, textbooks, and university presses. In effect, these recommendations constituted a broad program for regional library cooperation.¹⁹

In the following year activity seemed to shift to the school library field. As background, one should remember that for some time, under the leadership of the Educational and Cultural Council of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA), a number of activities had taken place to integrate primary and secondary education in the five countries, including the development of common textbooks. It was therefore logical to see school libraries receiving attention; a UNESCO expert spent the last three months of 1966 studying the region's need for school libraries. He recommended starting a pilot project for library development in Honduras which would emphasize school libraries and the creation of a regional

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training center which would offer intensive courses of four- to six-week duration for groups consisting of three or four teacher/librarians from each country. The latter program, he suggested, could begin in 1971, contingent upon acceptance of the first recommendation.²⁰ As a result of this survey, a ten-year School Library Pilot Project began in Honduras in 1967, jointly conducted by that country and UNESCO in two stages: an intensive stage (1968-72) under the direct guidance of UNESCO experts, and a second stage (1973-77). Based primarily upon the 1966 proposals, the goal of the first stage was the installation of a total of 396 school libraries of four different sizes by 1973; the first of these began operations in June 1969. The cooperation embraces not only UNESCO (which provides support in the form of specialists, equipment and books) and the government of Honduras, but also UNICEF, the Spanish Ministry of Education, and the Central Bank of Honduras. It is hoped not only that the program will develop libraries in Honduras but that, by serving as a pilot project for the region, the experience gained will assist the remaining countries in Central America.²¹

In 1968 UNESCO sponsored a meeting on school library development for the region; twenty participants assembled at Antigua, Guatemala, and examined the role of school libraries in education, planning library services, principles for organizing school library networks, staffing and training, finance, and the need for an educational documentation center. As a result of these deliberations, the participants made suggestions and recommendations for the development of school libraries in the region through joint efforts on the part of the governments, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana (Spain), and various organizations within the region; ODECA; the Central American Institute for Educational Administration and Supervision (ICASE); and the Institute for Educational Research and Improvement (IIME).²²

Apparently little activity took place with regard to university libraries for several years, but in 1973 the Association of Private Universities of Central America and Panama (Federación de Universidades Privadas de América Central y Panamá, FUPAC) with the collaboration of the Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana (OEI) and the Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, sponsored a meeting in Santo Domingo on the coordination of library and information services in these institutions. Since the six member universities (four in Central America, one in Panama, and one in Santo Domingo) were all established in the 1960s and have relatively small enrollments and

limited resources, they face similar problems in attempting to improve their library collections and services. Among the topics considered at this meeting were coordination of standards for cataloging, cooperative development of library resources, interlibrary loans, and the use of computers for information storage and retrieval. The meeting participants felt that all of these topics needed further study before concrete proposals could be made. In the area of library resources, it was suggested that, given the distances between the universities represented and slow communication, it would be wise for discussion of cooperative acquisitions to take place first at the national level, bringing in those universities not members of FUPAC (i.e., the national universities, already working together in CSUCA in the case of Central America) before attempting to coordinate collection development for the entire region.²³

In 1974, additional discussion on the problems of Central American libraries took place at a workshop on the acquisition of foreign materials for Central American and Caribbean libraries. Sponsored by UNESCO, sessions were held in April at the University of Texas in Austin, immediately prior to the nineteenth meeting of the Seminar on Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). Twelve specialists on Latin American materials from the United States joined an equal number from Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico in considering the topic. Since the majority of the non-U.S. participants came from Central American university libraries, considerable discussion centered around their problems in the selection, acquisition and organization of materials. Cooperative solutions, especially in the processing of materials, were stressed as the most efficient means of attacking many problems. It is expected that a final report on the workshop's deliberations will be published.²⁴

THE ANDEAN COUNTRIES

Regional cooperation, in the sense generally used in this paper, has come to the Andean countries only recently. However, with the signing in 1970 of the *Convenio Andrés Bello* for educational, scientific, and cultural integration among these six nations (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela), such movements received a strong stimulus. Under the joint sponsorship of Spain's *Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana*, UNESCO, and the government of Venezuela, fifteen specialists, observers and advisors from these countries and elsewhere met in Caracas, Venezuela in November 1971 to consider improving

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library service and scientific and technical information in the region.

From the countries' responses to a questionnaire, and from the discussions at the conference, the group drew a number of conclusions. It felt that library and information service had reached varying levels in the Andean countries and that, despite a number of basic shortcomings, the region provided notable examples of effectiveness in such areas as school libraries, educational documentation, public libraries, establishment of a structure for a national information system, and the compilation of a national bibliography. Nevertheless, slow progress in creating integrated library and information service in individual countries and in the region could be accelerated through the development and application of standards. As a cooperative project, each country might study the question of standards for one type of library or information service and present the results at a second regional conference. At this meeting it was judged that the countries' educational systems did not provide sufficient training for users in the handling of information sources. There was general agreement that the lack of a current regional bibliography was not only a serious obstacle to cultural understanding, but also was depriving libraries of an adequate selection source. Recognizing the difficulties which the countries would face in the initial phase of the development of library service and scientific and technical information, the meeting attendants believed that it would be helpful to request from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) or the Organization of American States (OAS) a regional expert to provide assistance during this time.

After presenting its general conclusions, the group made six recommendations: (1) that the government of each country take the necessary political, administrative and financial measures to integrate library and information services into its plans for socio-economic development; (2) that such services be conceived as coordinated systems, compatible among the countries of the region so as to facilitate information transfer and regional international coordination with the UNISIST program of UNESCO; (3) that each system be planned within national and regional development plans, so that priorities can be determined and national and regional resources be utilized rationally in both individual countries and the larger area; (4) that governments determine the proper financial support for the planning recommended above; (5) that each government establish such an agency for this work as it considers appropriate; and (6) that a second meeting take place in Colombia late in 1972, devoted to studying the

structure and functions of national library services and scientific and technical information systems, to addressing the definition of goals, and to specific studying of the problems relating to statistics, training, and library legislation.²⁵

This meeting took place in Colombia (Bogotá, Río Negro and Medellín) in November 1972, with forty participants. Ten working papers presented information on such topics as objectives and functions of national library and scientific/technical information services, statistics applied to the planning and development of such services, library legislation, training of librarians and specialists in scientific and technical information, standards for school library service, standards for public library service, and the format for mechanizing current bibliographies. After considering the papers and discussions heard at the meeting, the group formed committees to study most of these topics, with the final recommendations including plans for short- and medium-term programs of action. In relation to cooperation, of special interest is the recommendation that the OEI consult with the general secretariat of the Convenio Andrés Bello to arrange for a meeting at which OEI, UNESCO, and the Pan American Union could study the coordination of their efforts in the Andean countries.²⁶

EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANSHIP

The typical program of education for librarianship in Latin America has usually evolved by passing through six successive stages, from the short course given to meet immediate needs for improving the organization of libraries in the area to the full professional school whose students receive a university degree after three or four years of study.²⁷ In other words, each program has, until recently, functioned in relative isolation from similar national and foreign institutions. The library school seldom concerned itself with cooperating with other schools; for obvious reasons it showed more interest in working with libraries in the area which hired its graduates. One institution, however, did not follow this pattern: the Inter-American Library School (Escuela Interamericana de Bibliotecología, EIBM), at the University of Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia, was founded for the specific purpose of serving as a regional training center. It is probably the most conspicuous example of cooperation in the field of education for librarianship; in fact, the school owes its very existence to the cooperative efforts of the University of Antioquia, Colombia's Fondo

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Universitario Nacional, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Certainly the inter-American nature of the school aroused the interest of the Rockefeller Foundation and was partially responsible for its continuous support (a total of \$557,690) during the years 1956-70. Also, from the outset the school was assisted by the OAS in all matters relating to program and staff, and with the termination of the Rockefeller grants the school has received financial support as a multinational project of the OAS since 1971. The EIBM has drawn students from all over Latin America, especially for the more than twenty special courses or workshops which it has offered since 1960. These courses have had cooperative support from the students' own institutions and grants from their governments, the Pan American Union and the Pan American Health Organization. Similarly, it has drawn many of its faculty from outside Colombia. Although the largest number has come from the United States, other countries represented include Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.²⁸

However, the most important venture of the EIBM which involved cooperation with other library educators was the special project in the 1960s on the present status and future needs of the library profession and of library science teaching in Latin America. One part of this project resulted from joint efforts on the part of an appropriate body in each Latin American country which gathered factual data (including information on the training available through library schools and other types of courses, resources and needs of the schools, working conditions, library legislation, and the overall need for librarians in the next ten years) and EIBM, which arranged for the analysis of these reports (published in 1965).²⁹ In addition, three study groups, each consisting of about seven persons active in library education in various countries, met in Medellín for two-week sessions in November 1963, August 1964, and November 1965. The first study group made suggestions regarding library schools and the minimum curriculum in terms of class hours and course content; the second and third study groups examined each of the proposed courses in detail, then prepared an outline and compiled a bibliography.³⁰ These evaluations represented not only an attempt to raise the level of courses but also to make available the consensus reached by leading library educators from several countries. The most important result of the project was, however, the first set of standards for Latin American library schools—a series of qualitative statements on administration, organization and financial support, curriculum, faculty, quarters and equipment, and professional library.³¹ These standards have received

wide dissemination in the following years and have undoubtedly influenced later study and discussion in a number of countries. In Brazil and Argentina, for example, several schools reviewed their curricula, staffing patterns, facilities, and financial support in light of the so-called "Medellín standards," which have also proven helpful in the discussion of these matters with university administrators. The fact that library educators from several nations could arrive at a consensus on standards for evaluating their programs ranks as an important accomplishment in cooperation.

Ten years later an evaluation of the merit and impact of the work of the three study groups and of the Medellín standards was prepared for a meeting on the OAS's programs in library education. The author concluded that the studies and publications of the project, while not of equal value, were on the whole both necessary and useful at the time. With the passing of a decade, developments in technology and socio-economic and political changes which occurred in Latin America have inevitably influenced the objectives and goals of library and documentation service. Indeed, many changes in the profession would make it both easier and more promising to undertake a similar project now than in the 1960s. Of the ten recommendations made, the most important is probably the one which suggests that some agency, preferably an international organization, sponsor a study on the present state of education for librarianship in Latin America; this would include not only a revision of the suggested minimum curriculum but also the necessary updating of the bibliographies, the training of library science teachers, and the place of research in library education.³²

We have seen that the association often functions as an important vehicle for cooperative activity in Latin America. The call for an association which would reflect the special concerns of library educators dates back to the first Assembly of Librarians of the Americas, held in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1947, and found its voice in a resolution: "[Resolved] That a Latin American Association of Library Schools and Library Science Professors be established, for the purpose of promoting uniformity and cooperation in the training of librarians. [Resolved] That this association should also act to insure the realizing of proposals and recommendations of this Assembly relating to education for librarianship."³³ Thus, an association came into being as a permanent committee of the assembly, but it appears to have been inactive. The present association of library schools—Asociación Latinoamericana de Escuelas de Bibliotecología y

Ciencias de la Información (ALEBCI)—was not organized until 1970, during the 35th meeting of FID in Buenos Aires. The founders were able to draw upon the experience of the Brazilian Association of Library Schools (Associação Brasileira de Escolas de Biblioteconomia e Documentação, ABEBD), founded in 1967; an older model was obviously the Association of American Library Schools (AALS). Like the latter, ALEBCI consists primarily of institutional members, of which there are now approximately twenty. ALEBCI's statutes set forth its purpose—"to contribute, in an organized and progressive manner, to the improvement of education for librarianship and information science in Latin America"—and list nine specific ways for doing so.³⁴ The successive meetings of the association have taken place in connection with the FID/CLA sessions in Lima (1971), Mexico City (1972), and Bogotá (1973). At the last of these a specific program of goals was considered, including revision of the Medellín standards. ALEBCI's interest would seem to offer the possibility not only of collaboration, but also of wider participation in and support of the standards than was possible in the 1960s.³⁵ During the term of the first president (1971-73) the secretariat functioned at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and for the period 1973-75 it is located at the Autonomous National University of Mexico in Mexico City. Since September 1972, ALEBCI has issued a quarterly newsletter, *Boletín Informativo*, with announcements and brief news items on programs of library education in Latin America; in 1974 the first supplement carried statistical information on enrollments and graduates of these programs.³⁶ It is clear that this young association has much potential, and the interesting possibility of a cooperative working relationship with AALS seems to hold promise.

THE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE OAS

Even from the selective and limited overview presented above, it is apparent that many organizations are actively cooperating to further the development of library and information services in Latin America. In fact, information assembled ten years ago revealed that approximately eighty different agencies—international and national, official and nongovernmental—were operating programs beneficial to libraries in Latin America. This assistance was taking such forms as advisory services, compilation and publication of bibliographic works, donation of books and periodicals as well as of money for the purchase of library materials, translation of works into the languages

of Latin America, development of school and public libraries, training and exchange of librarians, production of tools for librarians, construction of library buildings, improvement of library organization and administration, and centralization and coordination of different types of services.³⁷

Although no recent survey presents similar information for the mid-1970s, there is little doubt that the organization which is most active in cooperating with many agencies for library development is the Organization of American States, working through the Library Development Program of its general secretariat, the Pan American Union. Therefore, it seems appropriate to comment on these operations, even though the OAS has been previously mentioned in this article.

The creation and maintenance of the Columbus Memorial Library clearly demonstrates the interest of the inter-American system in matters relating to books, but the present Library Development Program of the Pan American Union apparently did not emerge as a distinct program until 1956, when a modest beginning took place with the creation of a two-member staff and the beginnings of a publication program. Of at least equal importance was the fact that the program began to assemble a great deal of information relating to the state of library and information services in Latin America, so that it has become one of the most important clearinghouses for such information—itself a very useful cooperative activity, since the program depends upon a multitude of organizations and individuals to supply data. Unfortunately the systematic dissemination of much of this information decreased with the demise of the newsletter, *Inter-American Library Relations*, formerly published quarterly.

At present, the Library Development Program has responsibility for the Inter-American Program for the Development of Libraries, Bibliography and Archives. The activities of this sub-program fall under three headings: "1) activities of benefit to libraries and archives in general in Latin America, in support of Latin American area studies programs in the United States, and Latin America; 2) activities related specifically to improving and extending school and university libraries; and 3) activities in support of scientific and technological research and information services required for technological transfer in Latin America."³⁸ The means for carrying out such programs are divided into those carried out at the General Secretariat and those conducted in the field. Almost invariably the latter group involves cooperation with other organizations, usually national institutions such as government

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agencies and universities. A few examples of cooperation between the Library Development Program and other agencies are: its continuing work in the field of education for librarianship, carried out in cooperation with the Inter-American Library School; technical assistance to the government of Colombia for the development of a unified national plan for library and documentation services; technical assistance to study the library needs of Nicaragua following the devastating earthquake of December 1972; technical assistance provided to individual institutions (e.g., University of the West Indies, Universidad Nacional de Asunción, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria); sponsorship of the Inter-American Seminar on the Integration of Information Services in Archives, Libraries and Documentation Centers; and continuance of the program to produce necessary tools for library organization.

This article has reviewed some of the current trends in library cooperation in Latin America but, as stated at the outset, it has concentrated on developments which relate to significant portions of this area; even so, no pretense is made at having been complete in this coverage. Nevertheless, the evidence clearly suggests that cooperation is a growing movement within Latin America, and indeed that this movement is in a relatively early phase of development. As cooperation continues it is bound to move into a period of greater utilization of specific devices; it will then be important to remember that what will succeed in one part of Latin America may very well need to take a different form in another region. Adaptation is one of the keys to success in cooperative library endeavors throughout Latin America.

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